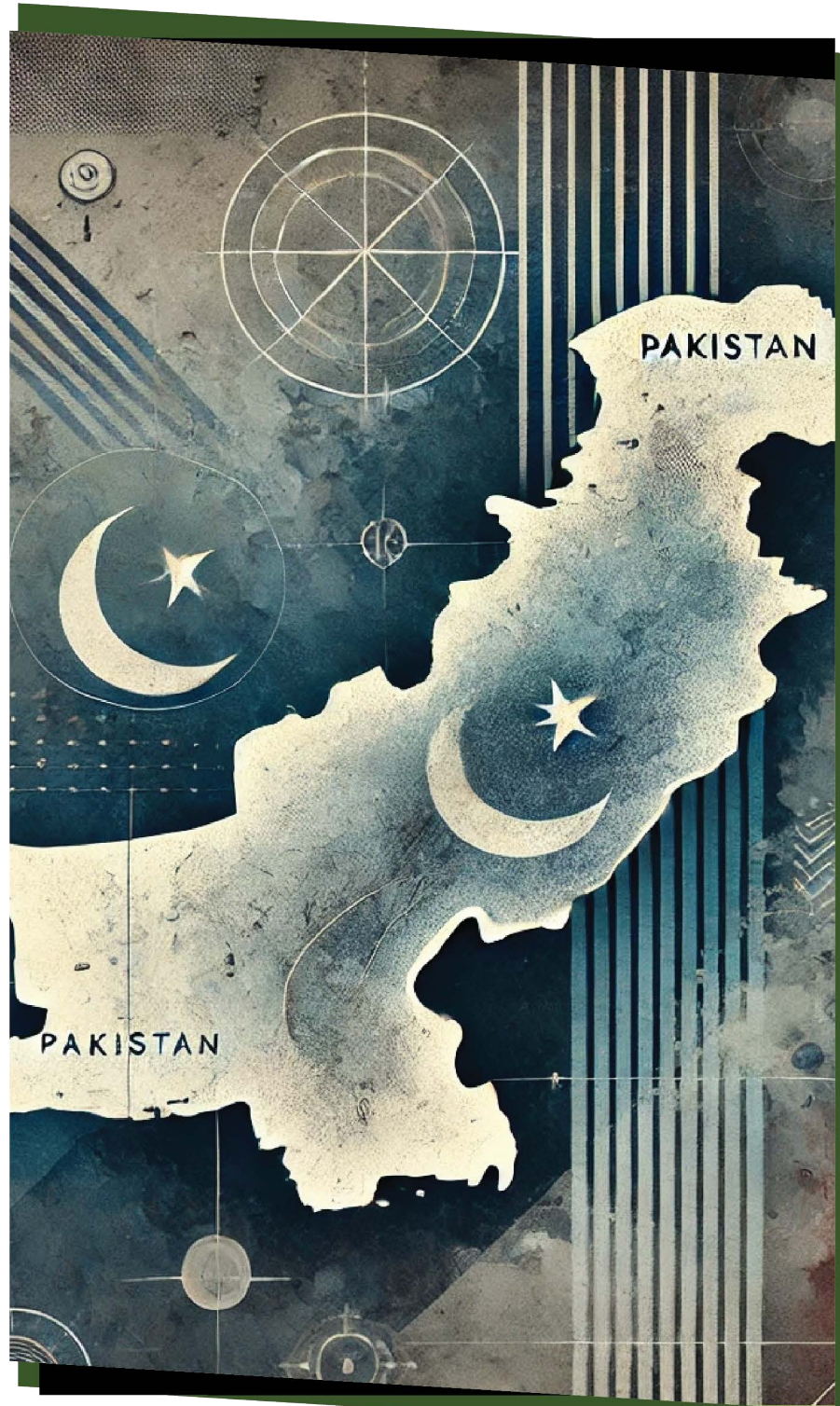


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# Pak applicants to face tougher Italy visa checks

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**ROME:** Italy will offer an extra 10,000 migrant work visas next year for people who look after old people and the disabled, the government said on Wednesday, as it adopted a new package of migration rules.

The government statement said, among other things, that tougher checks would apply in 2025 for applications from countries deemed to be at higher risk of fraud, namely Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Saddled with an ageing population and a sagging birth rate, Italy has long faced a shortage of caregivers, and charities including the Sant'Egidio Catholic group have lobbied the government to allow more of them to come from abroad.

The "experimental" extra quota for caregivers will add to the 452,000 work visa number announced for the 2023-2025 period last year - which represented an increase of nearly 150% from the previous three years.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's rightist government has passed an array of measures to curb illegal arrivals, but has also expanded legal immigration channels in response to growing labour shortages.

Wednesday's decree featured another crackdown on sea rescue NGOs, indicating that aircraft charities use to spot migrant boats in distress must immediately inform authorities of their movements or else face penalties.

The measure echoes what is already in place for NGO boats, which are subject to fines and grounding at port when Italian authorities decide that their rescue operations have not been correctly coordinated with the coast guard.

The new decree also introduced stricter anti-fraud safeguards in the migrant visa system, after Meloni denounced it had been infiltrated and fraudulently exploited by crime groups, including the mafia.

Source: The Express Tribune, October 3, 2024



# Security forces kill six BLA militants in Harnai

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- **Fugitive, cop killed in Khuzdar**
- **Attack on prisoners' van and ensuing shootout claim three lives in Dera Murad Jamali**
- **Robbers kill two in Quetta for resisting attempt to snatch motorbike**

QUETTA: Security forces killed at least six alleged terrorists of the banned BLA in Harnai district during a joint operation, conducted on the secret information about the presence of armed militants, officials said.

They were involved in attacks on security forces and innocent people, the officials added.

During the operation, sources said, the BLA hideouts in Harnai were targeted, eliminating Shafu Samalani alias Tadin, Sarmad alias Dasteen, Mohammad Gul Mari alias Wahid Baloch, Ghulam Qadir Mari alias Anjir Baloch, Ubaid Baloch alias Fida, and Taj Mohammad alias Babul.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid tribute to the security forces for conducting the successful intelligence-based joint operation on Sept 12 in the northeast district of Balochistan.

He said the forces foiled the nefarious intentions of the terrorists and "brought the terrorists to a terrible end by taking timely action. [We] salute the bravery of the security forces".

Reiterating the government's resolve to eliminate terrorism from the motherland, the interior minister said the nation was proud of the professional skills of "our brave security forces".

### Cop, fugitive killed in Khuzdar

In Khuzdar district, a notorious dacoit was killed and his accomplice injured in an exchange of gunfire between police and armed bandits near Bakra Mandi, in the Jhalawan Complex area of New Adda.

A police officer, Jaleel Ahmed Sheikh, embraced martyrdom in the gunfight.

Abdul Qayyum Sanari, the slain dacoit, was a fugitive from Kalat Jail, where he had been detained for involvement in cases of armed robbery and several other criminal activities.

The incident occurred early morning when police confronted a group of dacoits near the Bakra Mandi. During the intense exchange of fire, police officer Jaleel Ahmed Sheikh was martyred, while one of the dacoits was killed and another wounded. The slain dacoit was later identified as Sanari while his accomplice as Nazir Ahmed Nathwani.

## **Attack on prisoners' van**

In Dera Murad Jamali, a prisoners' van came under attack as soon as it left the main gate of district jail for a local court, on Wednesday.

Police described the shooting as a result of old enmity, which claimed the lives of an under-trial prisoner and a police official. In an ensuing exchange of fire, one of the shooters was killed and his accomplice was injured. He was arrested soon afterwards, officials said, adding that two police personnel and another prisoner also sustained injuries during the shootout.

SSP Nasirabad Fahad Khan Khosa told Dawn the armed men opened fire at the van when it came out of the prison's main gate, resulting in the killing of one prisoner on the spot. Subsequently, the police squad along the prisoner van immediately returned fire and killed one of the shooters.

Soon after the incident, police shifted the body and the injured including head constable Habibullah Sasoli and two other personnel Barkat Ali and Abdul Khaliq to district hospital. The injured head constable later died during treatment at the hospital, SSP Khosa said.

While the prisoner who died in the attack was identified as Nazar Muhammad Hajwani Jamali, the identity of the injured could not be confirmed.

A senior officer said the attack was result of an old enmity.

He said that one of the attackers, who was injured in the exchange of fire with police, was arrested and hospitalised. Efforts were underway for the arrest of others involved in the attack.

## **Motorbike snatchers kill two men**

In Quetta, motorbike snatchers killed two men in the Spiny Road area upon facing resistance, officials said.

Police denied social media reports that it was a sectarian killing and said that the armed men wanted to snatch motorcycle.

The deceased were later identified as Shamsullah and Nusratullah.

After collecting evidence at the crime scene, police launched a search for the attackers. No arrest was reported till late Wednesday evening.

Abdul Wahid Shahwani in Khuzdar and Ali Jan Mangi in Dera Murad Jamali also contributed to this report

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 3, 2024**

# Bringing them home

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RABIYA JAVERI AGHA

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's visit to Pakistan is a crucial opportunity to address an important humanitarian and diplomatic issue – the signing of a long-awaited prisoner transfer agreement. A PTA would allow our nationals imprisoned in Malaysia to serve the remainder of their sentences in Pakistan, close to their families and communities. This is a matter of protecting the fundamental rights and dignity of our citizens, many of whom are vulnerable and facing harsh conditions abroad.

Pakistani prisoners in Malaysia have skyrocketed to 463 as of September 2024, a staggering 55 per cent surge in just seven months from February's count of 299. More disturbingly, it marks a massive 142pc increase since September 2022. These numbers don't just represent statistics; they reflect disrupted lives and separated families, underscoring an urgent need for action and diplomatic intervention.

These Pakistanis face a range of charges, from immigration violations and petty offences to more serious crimes, often under harsh laws like the Dangerous Drugs Act. Many face harsh penalties due to inadequate legal representation, language barriers, and limited consular support. Pakistan must act by securing a PTA with Malaysia, following the example set by neighbouring countries such as Iran.

A growing prisoner count highlights the need for systemic solutions. With international labour migration key to Pakistan's economy, protecting citizens abroad is vital. Over 85,000 Pakistanis in Malaysia contributed \$71 million in remittances in 2024 alone. However, these migrant workers often find themselves at a disadvantage as foreign nationals in Malaysia's strict immigration system, leading to prolonged detentions and harsh sentences.

A PTA would allow our nationals to serve their sentences in a familiar environment where they can access support networks, family visits, and culturally sensitive legal assistance. Without a PTA, these individuals remain isolated, facing legal challenges and the emotional toll of separation from their families.

In recent years, Pakistan and Malaysia have strengthened commercial ties through increased trade and migration. As this relationship continues to grow, it is imperative that both nations ensure adequate protections for their citizens. The high rate of Pakistani migration to Malaysia means that more Pakistanis will inevitably face legal issues abroad. The absence of a PTA would mean continued detentions under foreign systems.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's empathy for human rights is well-known, making this visit a timely opportunity to bring the issue to the forefront of diplomatic talks. His recent leadership in signing a PTA with Iran in 2024 serves as an example that Pakistan can follow. Malaysia's consistent engagement with Iran and other countries demonstrates a growing international recognition of the importance of these agreements. Since 2020, Malaysia has

signed PTAs with Ukraine, Brunei, and Iran facilitating not only the transfer of prisoners but also strengthening diplomatic and consular relations. With Pakistan's rapidly increasing population in Malaysia, it must aim to be the next country to formalise such an agreement.

In light of this pressing issue, the National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan is taking proactive steps to address the situation. We are collaborating closely with SUHAKAM, Malaysia's National Human Rights Institution, to gather comprehensive data on Pakistani prisoners in Malaysia. This partnership allows access to crucial information that might otherwise be difficult to obtain. We are also working in tandem with the Pakistan High Commission in Malaysia, which has been instrumental in sharing data and providing support for our efforts.

NCHR and SUHAKAM's collaboration facilitates better understanding of the situation and strengthens diplomatic ties between our two nations. By working together, we can ensure that Pakistani prisoners' rights are protected, and their cases are handled with care and consideration.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's state visit presents a unique opportunity to address this critical issue. His human rights commitment makes him an ideal partner for Pakistan. The NCHR-SUHAKAM collaboration sets a strong foundation for PTA discussions, showing both countries' commitment to this humanitarian concern.

It is time for Pakistan and Malaysia to sign a PTA. This is a diplomatic necessity and moral obligation. NCHR is ready to support the Pakistani government, using our collaboration with SUHAKAM and the Pakistan High Commission to uphold Pakistani nationals' rights abroad.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 3, 2024**

# 6 army men martyred, as many TTP terrorists killed in North Waziristan IBO

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Six soldiers were martyred and as many TTP terrorists killed in North Waziristan as security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO), the military's media affairs wing said.

According to a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), six Khawarij (TTP terrorists) were neutralised during an exchange of fire that took place between the security forces and terrorists on the night of October 4/5 in Spinwam general area of North Waziristan.

The statement said that as many "brave" soldiers including Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ali Shoukat, who was leading the troops, were martyred.

The five soldiers who "paid the ultimate sacrifice" were identified as Lance Naik Muhammad Ullah, Lance Naik Akhtar Zaman, Lance Naik Shahid Ullah, Lance Naik Yusaf Ali and Sepoy Jameel Ahmed.

In another statement, ISPR said that two Khawarij were killed, including "ring leader Attaullah, also known as Mehran" as law enforcement agencies conducted a joint intelligence-based operation in Charbagh general area of Swat.

Attaullah was "actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including the Improvised Explosive Device blast on a Police Vehicle escorting the convoy of foreign dignitaries in Swat on 22 September 2024", it added.

ISPR said sanitisation operations were being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists, adding that "security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve."

While it wasn't explicitly mentioned in the statement which terrorist group was involved in the attack, in July, the government, through an official notification, designated the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as Fitna al Khawarij, while mandating all institutions to use the term khariji (outcast) when referring to the perpetrators of terrorist attacks on Pakistan.

Pakistan has lately witnessed a sharp uptick in the number of attacks targeting security forces, other law enforcement agencies, and security checkpoints, particularly in Balochistan and KP.

Attacks escalated after the TTP broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022 and vowed to target security forces.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 5, 2024**



# Karachi terror attack killing 2 Chinese nationals to not go unpunished

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Security officials examine at the site of an explosion which occurred near Karachi airport in Karachi.

The Foreign Office on Monday said the terror attack near the Karachi airport, which left two Chinese nationals dead, would not “go unpunished”.

A massive explosion occurred on a road near Jinnah International Airport, killing a total of three people and injuring at least 11 others, including a Chinese citizen.

Conflicting accounts emerged in the wake of the powerful explosion, which was heard across town – as far away as Clifton – with officials oscillating between calling it an “IED (improvised explosive device) blast” and an explosion triggered after a vehicle collided with an oil tanker.

Footage of the scene of the explosion showed several vehicles engulfed in flames. Officials said the Bomb Disposal Squad was working to ascertain the nature of the blast.

The outlawed Majeed Brigade of the banned outfit Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) released a statement claiming responsibility for the attack.

In a statement today, the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan confirmed that two of its nationals had died and another was injured, along with “some local casualties”.

The FO said in its statement: "Pakistan strongly condemns the heinous terrorist attack near Karachi airport last night, which claimed the lives of two Chinese engineers while injuring another.

"[...] Pakistan's security and law enforcement agencies will spare no effort in apprehending the perpetrators and their facilitators. This barbaric act will not go unpunished," it vowed.

The FO extended its deepest condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims, both Chinese and Pakistani, and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured.

"This deplorable act of terrorism is an attack not only on Pakistan but also on the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China.

"We remain resolute in bringing to justice those responsible for this cowardly attack, including the Majeed Brigade," the FO further said, referring to the outlawed group affiliated with the BLA.

The foreign ministry was in close contact with the Chinese Embassy for coordination and facilitation, the statement said.

"Pakistan and China are close partners and iron-brothers, united by a bond of mutual respect and shared destiny. Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects, and institutions in Pakistan, and will continue to work hand in hand with our Chinese brothers to defeat the forces of terror," the FO asserted.

Police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed told Dawn.com that the bodies of the two Chinese nationals and an unidentified individual were brought to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC). Their autopsies were conducted and relevant samples were collected, she added.

Dr Syed said a total of 10 injured individuals were brought to JPMC, including one whose condition was critical. Four of the injured were discharged after providing them with first aid treatment.

Meanwhile, a statement by Rescue 1122 said that the blaze caused in five vehicles by the blast had been brought under control. A total of at least seven vehicles were destroyed in the incident.

Earlier, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar said he had information the explosion was caused by an IED blast. However, Deputy Inspector General (East) Capt (retd) Azfar Mahesar said it would take time to ascertain the exact nature of the explosion.

Lanjar had also said that a convoy of foreign nationals was passing by the area when the explosion took place.

Following the incident, the Airport Security Force had sealed the exit and entry points of the airport and cordoned off the area. A traffic police statement issued at 8:22am said the airport road had been cleared and was open for traffic.

It said vehicles coming from Jinnah International Airport were being diverted to Model Colony Graveyard and Super Highway.

The Civil Aviation Authority said flights from Karachi were continuing "as usual" and "agencies are investigating the cause at the scene of the accident/explosion".

### Chinese embassy seeks 'thorough probe'

The Chinese embassy strongly condemned the "terrorist attack", expressing deep condolences to the "innocent victims of both countries and sincere sympathies to the injured and families".

In its statement, the embassy said a "convoy carrying Chinese staff of the Port Qasim Electric Power Company (Private) Limited was attacked near the Jinnah International Airport".

The embassy and consulate generals were "making every effort to handle the aftermath together with the Pakistani side", it added.

The embassy requested Pakistan to "thoroughly investigate the attack, severely punish the perpetrators, and take all necessary measures to protect the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects in Pakistan".

It reminded "Chinese citizens, enterprises and projects in Pakistan to be vigilant, pay close attention to the security situation, strengthen security measures, and make every effort to take safety precautions".

### LEAs' committee to probe incident

Separately, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, who last night took notice of the attack, convened a meeting to review law and order in Karachi.

According to a statement by CM Murad's spokesperson, the meeting was attended by the provincial home minister, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon, and Rangers Director General Major Gen Azhar Waqas, among others.

"The blast near the airport is intolerable. Such incidents should not take place," the chief minister was quoted as saying. He directed the police and other law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to intensify intelligence-gathering efforts and strengthen coordination among themselves.

CM Murad also ordered the formation of a joint committee comprising the police and LEAs to probe the incident.

### Condemnations

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he was "deeply shocked and saddened" by the incident.



Shehbaz Sharif  
@CMShehbaz



Deeply shocked and saddened by last night's tragic incident in Karachi, resulting in the loss of two precious Chinese lives & injuring another. I strongly condemn this heinous act and offer my heartfelt condolences to the Chinese leadership & the people of China, particularly the families of the victims. May the injured recover soon. The perpetrators of this dastardly incident cannot be Pakistanis but are sworn enemies of Pakistan. An immediate investigation is underway to identify them and bring them to justice. Pakistan stands committed to safeguarding our Chinese friends. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure their security & well-being.

9:26 AM · Oct 7, 2024 · 43.2K Views

“I strongly condemn this heinous act and offer my heartfelt condolences to the Chinese leadership and the people of China, particularly the families of the victims. May the injured recover soon,” the premier said on X.

“The perpetrators of this dastardly incident cannot be Pakistanis but are sworn enemies of Pakistan,” PM Shehbaz further said. He said an immediate investigation was under way to identify the miscreants and bring them to justice.

“Pakistan stands committed to safeguarding our Chinese friends. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure their security and well-being,” the prime minister vowed.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the incident, according to a statement by his ministry.

 **Ministry of Interior GoP** @MOIofficialGoP · 1h

وفاقی وزیرداخلہ محسن نقوی کی کراچی میں ائیرپورٹ سگنل کے قریب دھماکے کی شدید الفاظ میں مذمت  
وزیرداخلہ کا دھماکے میں 2 چینی شہریوں کے جاں بحق ہونے کے واقعہ پر گہرے دکھ اور افسوس کا اظہار  
وزیرداخلہ محسن نقوی کا جاں بحق چینی شہریوں کے لواحقین سے دلی ہمدردی اور تعزیت کا اظہار

1 2 16 355

 **Ministry of Interior GoP** @MOIofficialGoP

وزیرداخلہ محسن نقوی کی زخمیوں کی جلد صحتیابی کیلئے دعا  
جاں بحق چینی شہریوں کے سوگوار خاندانوں کے غم میں برابر کے شریک ہیں۔  
دکھ کی گھڑی میں چینی شہریوں کے خاندانوں سے مکمل یکجہتی کا اظہار کرتے ہیں۔  
اس المناک واقعہ کے ذمہ داران قانون کی گرفت سے نہیں بچ پائیں گے۔ محسن نقوی

[Translate post](#)

10:47 AM · Oct 7, 2024 · 74 Views

He expressed deep grief at the deaths of Chinese nationals in the blast and conveyed his sympathies to their bereaved families. “We express full solidarity with the families of the Chinese citizens in this moment of grief,” he said.

Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured, Naqvi said “those responsible for this tragic incident would not be able to escape the grip of the law”.

“The coward enemy made a heinous plot to damage Pak-China friendship,” the minister said.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said he was “deeply heartbroken by the tragic incident”.



**Sarfraz Bugti**   
@PakSarfrazbugti



I am deeply heartbroken by the tragic incident in Karachi, which took the lives of two Chinese nationals and left another injured. My heartfelt condolences go out to the Chinese leadership, people of China, and the victims' families. We strongly condemn this brutal act and assure our Chinese friends that those responsible will be brought to justice. Pakistan is committed to ensuring the safety and security of our Chinese brothers and sisters.

10:50 AM · Oct 7, 2024 · 4,534 Views

“My heartfelt condolences go out to the Chinese leadership, people of China, and the victims’ families,” CM Bugti said, strongly condemning the attack.

He assured “Chinese friends that those responsible will be brought to justice”, affirming that Pakistan was committed to ensuring the safety and security of the neighbour’s citizens.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 7, 2024**



# Action on transnational crime urged

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Pakistan has called for a holistic approach to fight transnational organized crime that tackles the root causes, promotes social inclusion, and ensure equal access to justice for all.

"Transnational organized crime continue to impede the rule of law, economic development and achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development," Ambassador Usman Iqbal Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues.

Speaking in a debate on crime prevention and criminal justice and countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, he said that climate change, with its devastating impacts, provides new opportunities for organized criminal groups to infiltrate vulnerable situations.

Other forms of transnational organized crimes, particularly money-laundering, cybercrime, corruption, human smuggling and trafficking, continue to pose formidable challenges, the Pakistani envoy pointed out.

Ambassador Jadoon highlighted Pakistan's efforts to combat money laundering and terror financing, including by setting up an independent financial monitoring unit to cooperate with other countries to wipe out the menace.

Drawing attention to a surge in hate crimes, including those fueled by Islamophobia, and other acts of provocation that incite intolerance and violence based on race, ethnicity, religion,

or belief, he stressed the need for fostering mutual respect for religious and cultural beliefs to promote understanding and coexistence.

The use of ICTs (information and communications technologies) for criminal purposes facilitates and enables several other types of crimes including illicit financial flows and corruption, posing a substantial challenge to global security, he said.

Ambassador Jadoon added that the exponential proliferation of disinformation through online platforms and social media has exacerbated social discord, competing nationalisms, discrimination, hate speech, stigmatization, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and related intolerances.

Pakistan, he said, looks forward to contributing constructively to the upcoming negotiations on the draft supplementary protocol to the Convention.

"This protocol should encompass additional criminal offenses, including cyber enabled crimes, to comprehensively address the concerns of all Member States," he said, while calling for fostering greater international cooperation, capacity-building, and legal frameworks to ensure a secure cyberspace for all.

As regards world drug problem, the Pakistani envoy said it continues to take a heavy toll on health, safety, security, socioeconomic development and well-being of individuals, families and society as a whole.

**SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, OCTOBER 9, 2024**

## Pakistan has 6,161 prisoners on death row

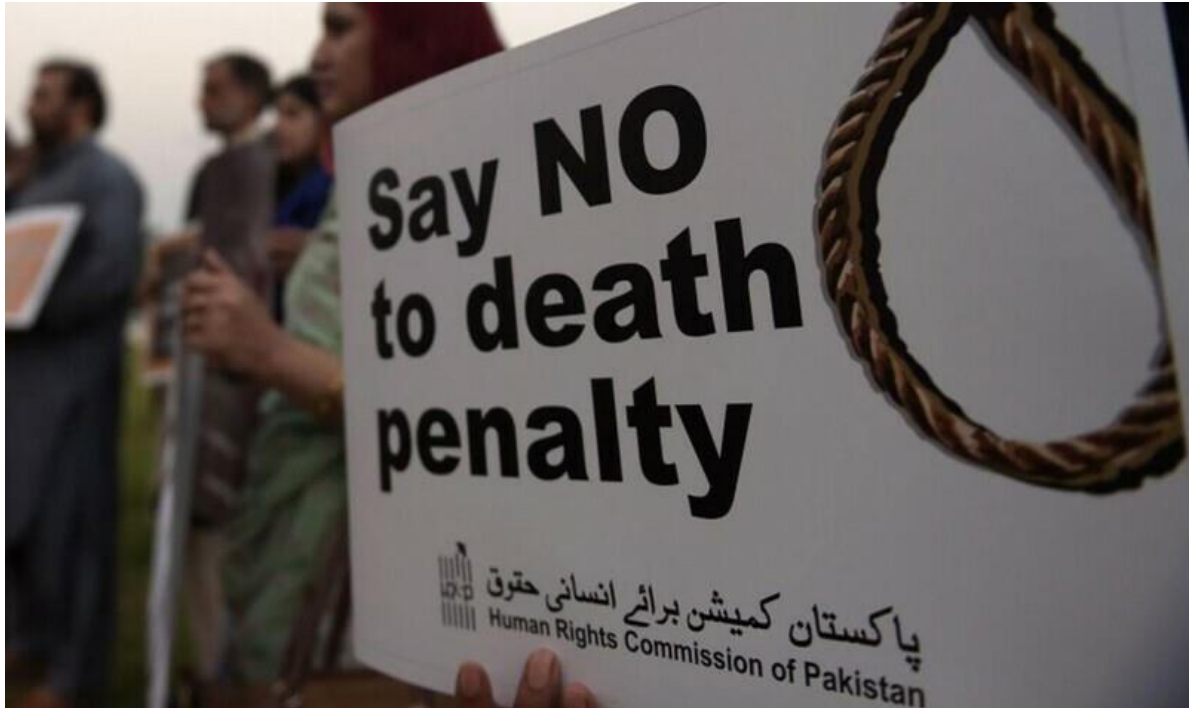


Image showing a banner saying “say no to death penalty” during a protest.

A total of 6,161 Pakistani prisoners were on death row in 2024, an increase from last year’s 6,039, according to a report by Justice Project Pakistan (JPP).

The JPP is a Lahore-based, non-profit legal action firm that represents the most vulnerable Pakistani prisoners facing the harshest punishments, at home and abroad.

The NGO recently released the third edition of its annual report called Death Penalty in Pakistan: Data Mapping Capital Punishment commemorating the 22nd World Day Against the Death Penalty.

The report showed that 6,161 prisoners were on death row in Pakistan which was an increase from 6,039 reported in 2023. The highest number was in Punjab at 2505 followed by KP at 2311 prisoners on death row.

The number contrasted with earlier trends such as in 2022 when the death row population stood at 3,226.

The 2024 edition extensively covered Pakistan’s death penalty landscape by consolidating both quantitative and qualitative data.

The report not only presents a statistical overview of death row but also delves into the underlying issues within Pakistan's criminal justice system that perpetuate the use of capital punishment," he statement said.

Pakistan was ranked as "one of the highest users of the death penalty globally" which is a "sobering statistic" highlighting "the urgent need for reform", according to the report.

It said that Pakistan has not carried out capital punishment since December 2019 but it "remains one of the most prolific users of capital punishment, with over 31 crimes punishable by death".

The report was available for public access on the NGO's digital platform.

"We invite policymakers, advocates, and the general public to engage with this data as part of a broader dialogue on justice reform," the statement said.

"Through this report, JPP seeks to magnify the individual stories behind these statistics, highlighting the often-overlooked human toll of state-sanctioned executions," it added.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 10, 2024**

## 21 killed, 10 coal mines destroyed in Duki carnage



QUETTA: Members of the Pakistan Mine Workers Federation shout slogans during a protest against the killing of coal miners in Balochistan's Duki district.

**QUETTA: At least 21 coal miners, including three Afghan nationals, were killed and six others injured in a deadly terrorist attack at a mines area of a private company, some 10km from Duki district headquarters.**

Officials said that militants fired rockets, hurled hand grenades and opened indiscriminate fire, killing the labourers and destroying at least 10 mines, mining equipment and machinery.

"They were around 35 to 40 in number. They first fired rockets and threw hand grenades at the mud houses of the coal miners and later opened heavy fire," SSP Asim Shafi said, adding that the overnight attack continued for an hour. Officials said that private security guards put up resistance for a brief time, but terrorists equipped with modern weaponry overwhelmed them.

The militants fired rockets and lobbed hand grenades to destroy mines and machinery. They killed some miners inside their rooms, while others were lined up outside their quarters before being shot dead, officials said.

"At least 10 mines were completely destroyed as they caught fire," Duki SHO Humayun Khan Nasar said, adding that mining equipment and machinery was also burnt down.



## Use of drones

Hafeezullah, a sub-contractor who hid himself along with some other survivors during the attack, claimed the terrorists used “drones to find the miners”. According to the eye-witness, the attackers said the miners had not heeded their warnings to stop work at the mine.

Security forces rushed to the spot after receiving information about the attack. Duki deputy commissioner Kaleemullah Khan, officials of the local administration along with police later also visited the site of Junaid Coal Co.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. Police and Levies personnel shifted the bodies and injured to the district hospital.

## Victims identified

The Duki SHO said the victims included three Afghan nationals, later identified as Abdul Wali, Ghulam Ali, and Hayatullah, while the other miners belonged to Zhob, Loralai, Kuch-lak, Qila Saifullah and Pishin. Their bodies were sent to their native towns.

“Initially, we have received 12 bodies and 16 injured coal miners in the hospital,” Dr Johar Khan Sadozai told Dawn, adding that nine miners died during treatment at the hospital as they had received multiple bullet injuries. They were hit in their heads and upper parts of their bodies. Dr Sadozai said that four injured were referred to the civil hospital in Quetta. The victims were identified as Abdul Malik, Muladad, Saeedullah, Jalal Khan, Fazal and Rozi Khan hailing from Zhob; Naseebullah, Samiullah, Abdullah and Naseebullah Jan belonging to Qila Saifullah; Maling, Hamdullah and Abdullah from Pishin district; Bismillah from Kuchlak; Jalat Khan from Loralai district, Samad Khan from Musakhail and Wali Muhammad from Harnai district, besides the three Afghan nationals.

## Threats, response

Mine owner Haji Khairullah Nasar later visited the area. He said, “I and many other coal mining owners were receiving threats from the militants for some time, but there was no information about such a big attack.”

He claimed that soon after receiving word of the attack, he informed the police and other security forces, but by the time they reached the site, the militants had fled.

Haji Khairullah Nasar, who is also chairman of the Duki district council, said 10 mines and allied machinery were completely burnt in the attack.

Later, hundreds of labourers took the bodies of some miners to Bacha Khan Chowk in Duki where they staged protest over the killings. They strongly condemned the attack and criticised the government and local administration for not providing complete security to those working in the mining areas. Later, Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti condemned the attack and directed the law enforcement agencies to take immediate and effective action against the terrorists.

CM Bugti directed the officials concerned to surround the area and arrest the culprits.

SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 12, 2024

# Hype, hope, and hard truths of CPEC

BY SYED KALEEM IMAM



This photo taken on March 21, 2023 shows the view of cooling towers at the Thar Coal Block-I Coal Electricity Integration project in Sindh province, Pakistan.

As the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) enters its second phase, it is time to take stock. After a decade of grand promises, billions of dollars in investments and countless ribbon-cutting ceremonies, the question remains: has the megaproject truly delivered, or are we merely giving it a new coat of paint?

CPEC was formally launched on July 5, 2013, during a visit by the Pakistani prime minister to China. The initial announcement laid the groundwork for a broader framework of economic cooperation between the two countries. Momentum picked up in April 2015, when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan, marking the inauguration of the first set of CPEC projects with significant agreements to enhance the initiative's scope and scale.

The vision was simple: a network of roads, railways, ports, and energy projects that would transform Pakistan into an economic powerhouse, all while giving China direct access to the Arabian Sea. On paper, it was a win-win for both nations. Fast forward to 2024, and the results are mixed.

Over the past decade, more than \$30 billion worth of infrastructure projects have been completed, including the Gwadar port, various power projects, and roads connecting Pakistan with Western China. Thirteen power projects have been completed, and a 4,000-megawatt electricity transmission line now supports roughly one-third of Pakistan's power grid. Transportation infrastructure, including key roads, ports, and even the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train, has seen significant improvements. China has poured over \$25 billion into direct investments, and if the official narrative is to be believed, CPEC has created more than 230,000 jobs.

Despite these successes, the road has been far from smooth. The development of nine planned Special Economic Zones, which were to be the centerpieces of Pakistan's industrial revolution, has been hit by delays. Only four of these zones are currently under construction, and the expected industrial relocation from China to Pakistan has yet to materialize. Debt concerns have also cast a long shadow.

Security remains another thorny issue, particularly in Balochistan, where key CPEC projects are based. Despite enhanced security measures, terrorist attacks on Chinese nationals and infrastructure projects have persisted, stalling progress and deterring potential investors. The recent attack on Chinese nationals in Karachi has once again posed challenges to Islamabad and Beijing, and put Pakistan's security apparatus under severe scrutiny. With the Shanghai Cooperation Organization conference held on Tuesday and Wednesday, the timing couldn't be worse. And security is not just a local issue. The West's narrative around CPEC has been consistently negative. With the West overtly and covertly pressuring Pakistan to back out of CPEC, the project has stopped being just an economic venture and turned into a battlefield of narratives and perceptions.

Enter CPEC 2.0, the next phase of this ambitious endeavor, promising a shift in focus from infrastructure to industrial cooperation, agriculture, socio-economic development, and information technology. It sounds promising – a sign that both Islamabad and Beijing are keen to address gaps and learn from past mistakes.

For CPEC 2.0 to succeed, both Pakistan and China need to make some tough decisions. First and foremost, political stability and good governance are essential. It is the responsibility of Pakistan's civil government to take the lead on this by ensuring that democratic institutions are strengthened and competent professionals are placed in key positions. CPEC cannot be treated as a political football, with each new government fiddling with its priorities and stalling progress. There needs to be cross-party consensus on the importance of this project to ensure it stays on track regardless of who is in power.

Secondly, it is time to prioritize. Instead of spreading resources thin across too many sectors, the focus should be on completing key projects that can deliver immediate benefits. Industrial cooperation and job creation are great goals, but they need to be backed by real, tangible investments and incentives.

Thirdly, local capacity-building is crucial. Pakistan's industrial base is weak, and its workforce is under-skilled. If CPEC is to deliver on its promises, there needs to be a concerted effort to invest in vocational training, technology transfer and capacity improvements. It is not enough

to rely on Chinese expertise; Pakistan needs to develop its own. A country that cannot stand on its own feet is always going to lean on another.

Finally, security concerns need to be addressed head-on. The situation in Balochistan will not improve overnight; it needs a holistic approach that goes beyond simply deploying more troops. The rule of law and apolitical policing are the only answers. Engaging with local communities, addressing their grievances, and making them stakeholders in CPEC's success is key to ensuring the long-term viability of these projects. Simultaneously, countering hostile narratives and leveraging cultural connections will be essential in maintaining momentum and securing the trust of the local population. Law enforcement agencies should stop merely reacting to incidents and take security measures proactively. What's needed is not just more officers on the ground, but a strategic overhaul of Pakistan's approach to securing foreign nationals.

CPEC 2.0 is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a chance for Pakistan to finally capitalize on its strategic location and build a more vigorous, diversified economy. But it's also a reminder that the road to economic transformation is fraught with obstacles, many of them self-inflicted.

**SOURCE: CHINA DAILY, OCTOBER 15, 2024**

# Big Brother state

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PAKISTAN'S ranking in the Freedom on the Net 2024 report as a 'not free' country, however unfortunate, comes as no surprise. Scoring a dismal 27 out of 100, Pakistan is now listed alongside nations notorious for their curbs on online freedoms, such as China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The global decline in internet freedom for the 14th consecutive year is particularly pronounced in Pakistan, where the digital space has become increasingly stifled by state-imposed restrictions. Our low ranking stems from severe actions that checked seven out of the eight restrictive criteria outlined by Freedom House. The report highlights how the government has disrupted internet connectivity, blocked access to social media platforms, and censored websites hosting political, social, or religious content. Furthermore, internet users here allegedly face dire consequences for exercising their online rights, with instances of imprisonment and even physical violence in retaliation.

A significant concern, the report notes, is the manipulation of online discourse through pro-government commentators, a tactic deployed to shape public opinion. The report also indicates that the 2024 polls in Pakistan saw the rampant use of both offline and online tactics to suppress opposition, a stark reflection of how the state seeks to control not just physical spaces but virtual ones too. The erosion of digital freedoms is particularly worrisome in a country where internet access remains a crucial lifeline for news, activism, and dissent. This slide towards authoritarianism threatens not only individual freedoms but democracy itself. In the face of these curbs, the need for a free, safe, and open internet is more urgent than ever. The government must restore access to social media platforms, and reform laws that criminalise online expression. Greater transparency is needed around surveillance. The state must realise that in its zeal to 'manage' the web, it is incurring a great opportunity cost of an informed populace, a burgeoning economy and progress.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 19, 2024**



# Human rights review

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PAKISTAN is on shaky ground regarding human freedoms.

In a recent review, the UN Human Rights Committee – which carries out periodic assessments of other countries' rights record too – has expressed concern about escalating human rights abuses: politically motivated oppression, torture, eroding freedom to practise religious beliefs, forced conversions, curbs on the freedom of expression, a ban on student unions, restrictions on assembly, harassment of rights activists, crimes against women and children, capital punishment and extrajudicial killings.

Successive governments have been responsible for matters reaching this point, while certain state agencies can specifically be held responsible for crimes such as enforced disappearances. Besides, the state's failure to rein in radical religious elements has also contributed to a culture of fear. While the scale of intimidation is significant, the rising crime graph is the outcome of a corrupt, ineffective and inequitable criminal justice system and structural flaws in the security apparatus. Among other things, these factors have contributed to the rampant violence against women: for instance, a rape takes place every two minutes in the country because of a 3pc conviction rate.

As for Pakistan's children, not only are millions of them deprived of even basic freedoms like education and forced into manual labour, their existence itself is overlooked by the state: as the review notes, only 42pc of children under five were registered at birth.

Meanwhile, religious communities experience persistent tyranny through the misuse of blasphemy laws, while forced conversions underscore the defenselessness of the marginalised. Thus, the UN body dismissed the figure of 74 cases of forced conversions from the state party and observed that the actual number was far higher.

The review is a reminder that our constitutional protections exist as mere aspirations, and that the state has no regrets about its citizens morphing into missing persons, while it actively crushes dissent in places such as KP and Balochistan where movements protesting against atrocities by both the state and radical anti-state elements are growing. Even peaceful protesters have encountered the might of the state.

It is unfortunate that human rights are seen as a favour to the populace – an attitude that is visible in institutions and social groups, including the judicial system. It is an approach that prevents the authorities from forming pro-people policies or fortifying departments for social development and protecting them from exploitation.

Instead of focusing solely on Pakistan's economic woes, the state must take a holistic view. It must understand that a fresh human rights regime will be realised when elected representatives are held accountable for rights excesses in their constituencies, policies are in line with international standards, and the state has a heart.

SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 20, 2024

# Warning signs

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TROUBLING reports have emerged from Khyber's Tirah area of militant gangs entrenching themselves in the region. This is despite the fact that security forces have been conducting operations against such violent groups. As reported in this paper on Monday, militants belonging to the TTP and Lashkar-i-Islam – both banned outfits – have set up parallel courts in Tirah, started collecting taxes, and asked government officials to leave the areas. According to locals who spoke to this paper, militants have for several weeks been making announcements after Friday prayers ordering state employees to either relinquish their duties, or leave the region. Many government servants have reportedly left out of fear for their lives. News had first emerged of TTP and LI terrorists patrolling the area several months ago. Now it seems they have gained enough confidence to start setting up their own governance structure.

This shocking challenge to the state's writ cannot go unanswered. It should be remembered that the Talibanisation of Swat and the erstwhile Fata region started in similar fashion. It would be an immense folly if such a grave mistake were to be repeated by the state after so many civilians and security men paid with their lives in an effort to bring peace to the area. As the terrorists are currently operating in certain pockets, the security forces should focus on these areas in order to neutralise them. If the militants are left to their own devices, or counterterrorism operations fail to capture or eliminate them, they will continue to encroach upon more territory. Some voices – such as the recently concluded tribal jirga organised by the proscribed PTM – have called for the military, and militants, to vacate the Pakhtun areas. They have proposed that unarmed 'volunteers' take up security duties. While fears of the local population regarding terrorism, as well as large-scale military operations, are legitimate, calling for the security forces to vacate the area is an unrealistic demand. Moreover, it is unlikely that the TTP and their cohorts will pay much heed to the jirga resolutions and leave the area. Instead of launching fully fledged military operations, localised action should be taken to clear areas of militants. Thereafter, the civil administration and the LEAs, backed by the army where necessary, should make greater efforts to 'hold' and 'build' the areas so that terrorists cannot sneak back in.

SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 22, 2024

# Pakistan's flawed law enforcement undermines its contributions to global security

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DR SYED KALEEM IMAM

The breakdown of law and order is not just a failure of governance: it points to a deeper rupture within the social fabric, a rift that threatens the very foundation of justice and democracy. In Pakistan, three deeply flawed security tactics have taken root: extrajudicial killings, the misuse of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), and manipulation of the Fourth Schedule. These tactics, far from curbing crime and terrorism, risk turning the country into a lawless hub of extremism, thereby undermining its contributions in the global fight against terror.

It is appalling how frequently extrajudicial killings continue to occur, with the authorities offering the same old justification each time: that the accused died in a hail of gunfire from their accomplices. Meanwhile, law enforcers remain silent. It sends a distressing message: they are no longer the arbiters of justice. Quick, expedient measures have taken precedence for them, with those in power quietly condoning lawlessness even though crime can never be countered with such measures.

In just one month, more than four major staged encounters have come to light. In Quetta and Umerkot, police officers killed the very individuals they were meant to protect. When law enforcers begin committing crimes in the name of justice, it should cause serious alarm. Authority without accountability is a recipe for disaster; unchecked power is dangerous, and when those tasked with protecting society become its greatest threat, anyone can be next.

Instead of facing justice through the legal system, the plotters of the 2021 Chinese bus bombing incident were killed during an alleged escape attempt while they were serving their life sentences. The incident raised troubling questions: why were they killed rather than being prosecuted through proper channels? Was it sheer frustration with Pakistan's moratorium on the death penalty? If the goal was to send a message, justice delivered through lawful means would have been far more effective than resorting to extrajudicial measures.

Then there is the ATA; originally intended to combat terrorism, it has been grossly overextended to cover minor offenses and even political dissent. Since its implementation in 1997, 38,800 cases have been registered and 187,724 arrests have been made in connection with the law, but there have been only 9,560 convictions, many of which were overturned. Likewise, 28,655 individuals have been acquitted, among them 369 women who couldn't escape the ever-expanding definition of a 'terrorist' in the Pakistani legal system. This law must be prevented from being misused, and counselling and rehabilitation services need to be provided for those wrongly accused under it.

Relatedly, the Fourth Schedule, which was initially designed to monitor individuals suspected of terrorism, has now been turned into a tool to silence journalists, activists, and dissenters. Instead of countering genuine threats, it has been weaponized to intimidate the opposition under the guise of national security. This misuse of power has cemented the perception that institutions are no longer engaged in battling terrorism but using regulatory laws to silence voices that challenge the status quo.

The weakening of law enforcement through the decentralization of police forces under the 18th Amendment has worsened these issues. Rather than merit, leadership changes in the police are now decided by political factions seeking control over law enforcement. This power struggle has perverted the original mission of the police, leaving the public unprotected and vulnerable. The police, once guardians of public order, now serve political masters, using their power to settle scores.

On the other hand, the concept of accountability – once the cornerstone of law enforcement – has been all but abandoned. Without it, law enforcement has become even more of a battleground for political and bureaucratic tussles. Meanwhile, the public – the most vulnerable in this equation – watches helplessly as the law is perverted by those who should be upholding it.

It is time for the restoration of some accountability in the police forces. Rogue officers involved in extrajudicial killings must be prosecuted, sending a clear message that no one is above the law. The families of their victims deserve justice, not hollow apologies or coerced settlements. Recruitment of law enforcement personnel must be focused on encouraging professionalism, weeding out radical elements, and fostering a culture of respect for due process.

The ATA itself requires urgent restructuring. The Fourth Schedule must return to its original purpose – targeting genuine threats, not political dissenters. Law enforcement must stop being an arm of political power and return to its role as the protector of public safety and justice.

Let's remember that the rule of law is a necessity, not a choice. The unchecked misuse of the ATA, the manipulation of the Fourth Schedule, and the rise in extrajudicial killings have made it easy to brand anyone a terrorist or criminal, thereby stripping them of their dignity. Likewise, accountability is not a choice, it is an urgent necessity.

As one critic aptly stated, "The safeguard of our people's liberties is not the law, but the protection of the law against misinterpretation." The country's leadership must be compelled to rein in such abuses and restore a system where justice, democracy, and governance are upheld – not through violence, but through the rule of law.

**SOURCE: ARAB NEWS, OCTOBER 23, 2024**

## High-value target among 9 terrorists killed in Bajaur IBO



This photo combo, released on Oct 24, 2024, shows weapons, ammunition and explosives recovered during an IBO in Bajaur, KP.

A high-value target was among nine militants killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. "On the night of Oct 23/24, the security forces conducted an IBO on the reported presence of khawarij where "[own] troops effectively engaged the khawarij location", the ISPR said in a statement.

"After [an] intense fire exchange, nine khawarij including two suicide bombers and a high-value target khariji ring leader Said Muhammad alias Qureshi Ustad were sent to hell," it added.

The statement further said a "large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was recovered from killed khawarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as innocent civilians".

A sanitisation operation was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists in the area, the military's media affairs wing said.



It added: “[The] security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.”

In July, the government, through an official notification, designated the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as Fitna al Khawarij, while mandating all institutions to use the term khariji (outcast) when referring to the perpetrators of terrorist attacks on Pakistan.

The country has lately witnessed a sharp uptick in the number of attacks targeting security forces, other law enforcement agencies, and security checkpoints, particularly in Balochistan and KP.

Attacks escalated after the TTP broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022 and vowed to target security forces.

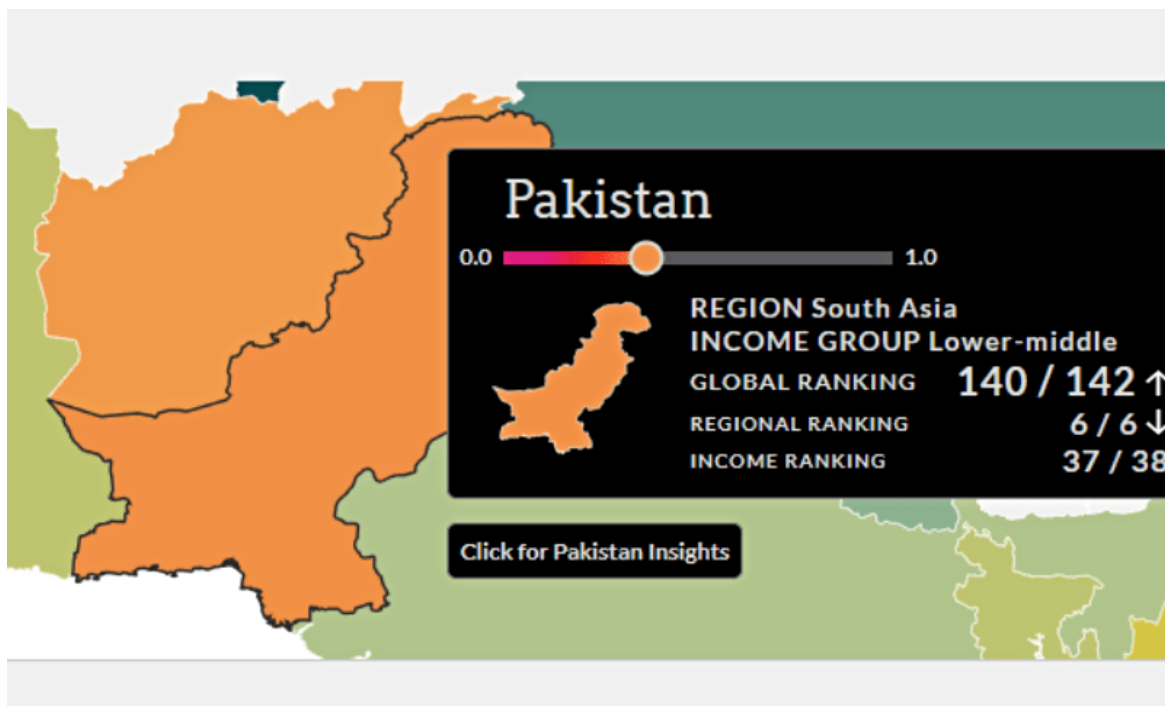
Earlier this month, two terrorists were killed during an IBO in KP’s North Waziristan district.

In a separate incident, six soldiers were martyred and 12 terrorists were killed during during two encounters in North and South Waziristan.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 24, 2024**

# Pakistan third-worst country for law and order, security: World Justice Project

AMIN AHMED



This screengrab shows Pakistan’s ranking for “Order and Security” category on World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index, as of Oct 26, 2024. — World Justice Project

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been ranked the third-worst among 142 countries in terms of law and order, according to a new report.

The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index is an annual survey which ranks nations on eight factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice.

In the 2024 edition of the report, Pakistan was ranked 140th for Order and Security, which measured three factors: crime control, protection from armed conflicts and the use of violence to resolve civil disputes.

Only Mali and Nigeria were below Pakistan in terms of law and order and security.

Pakistan ranked 103rd for constraints on government powers, 120th for corruption, 106 for open government, 125th for fundamental rights, 127th for regulatory enforcement, 128th for

civil justice and 98th for criminal justice. Among the six South Asian states, Pakistan and Afghanistan are at the bottom of the index.

Overall, the rule of law has declined globally for the seventh year in a row.

The report revealed that a majority of countries witnessed a dip in their overall rankings, marked by executive overreach, deteriorating human rights, and justice systems that are failing to meet people's needs.

Among the high-income group, Denmark topped the ranking, followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Germany.

## **'Eroding' rule of law**

This year, the rule of law weakened in 57 per cent of the countries surveyed.

However, the report also suggests that the decline is "slowing" and that "progress is possible" as the proportion of countries where the rule of law is eroding shrank for the third year in a row.

For the first time in five years, more countries – 59pc – improved than declined on the Absence of Corruption factor.

A majority of countries have also improved their criminal justice system, the report stated.

The decline in civil justice has also slowed since the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, it said, while acknowledging that problems delivering timely and independent civil justice continued to spread.

Between 2016 and 2024, people in 81pc of countries have lost protections for their fundamental rights. Additionally, 77pc have registered a dip in governmental checks and balances, including oversight by legislatures, courts, civil society, and the media.

"After seven consecutive years of rule of law declines, it can be easy to focus on the negative. But to do so would ignore accomplishments in anti-corruption and the hard work occurring to improve justice systems globally," WJP co-founder and president William H. Neukom said.

"The global community must redouble efforts to expand these rule of law gains in all areas."

## **Electoral transparency**

In the elections held in 2024 so far, the ruling party has maintained power in 13 out of 15 countries, the report stated.

Meanwhile, some of the most improved countries in the 2024 Index saw new, democratically elected governments take office last year, it said.

Voters in Brazil and Poland opted for a change in each country's most recent national elections. Both countries had experienced some of the largest rule of law declines since 2016 "before changing course in the past year".

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 26, 2024**

# Transnational organised crime

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TARIQ KHOSA

THE 12th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) was held in Vienna on Oct 14-18, 2024. It was heartening to note the surge in civil society representation which increased by over 90 per cent. Some 200 NGOs/CSOs participated and interacted with senior delegates of 192 state parties to the UN Convention during the plenary and around 65 side events.

The outgoing president of the COP mentioned the addition of three states, including Pakistan, to the list of countries that have ratified the UNTOC's Trafficking in Persons Protocol since 2022. During the general discussion on the convention, the DG FIA made a formal statement on behalf of the Pakistani government, highlighting the progress achieved in the review process. During the review of the implementation of UNTOC, this writer, representing an alliance of 35 Pakistani NGOs/CSOs and 65 national experts on organised crime, had the opportunity to present civil society's outlook on a strategy to ensure meaningful civil society engagement to achieve two outcomes. The first of these outcomes was that civil society perspectives were incorporated into the UNTOC review mechanism process in an impactful manner; and the second, the CSO community working against organised crime came together on a single platform to engage with the review mechanism.

One of the key initiatives of the UNODC is to initiate voluntary country-specific 'pilot initiatives' by interested member states, aimed at strengthening cooperation between the concerned national authorities, CSOs, academia, and the private sector. Mexico was the first country to launch the pilot initiative. Pakistan was the second globally, and the first in Asia, to launch the pilot initiative on the UNTOC review in Islamabad in September 2022.

Since then, Kenya and Angola have also launched voluntary pilot initiatives. Chile is to follow soon. In a special side event on strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration against transnational organised crime, Pakistan was cited in the context of international best practices regarding a joint strategy by the state and civil society to undertake meaningful engagement during the first cluster of the review mechanism on 'criminalisation and jurisdiction'. A trilateral cooperative framework between the Pakistani government, the civil society alliance and the UNODC has provided the impetus for laying a long-term roadmap for the UNTOC mechanism under forthcoming review clusters.

Civil society in Pakistan has published two annual reports for 2022 and 2023 on the progress in implementation of the review mechanism. The interior ministry established an UNTOC review secretariat in the National Police Bureau where some experts from civil society were embedded to deliberate on responses to the self-assessment questionnaires required to be submitted to Pakistan's two peer review countries.

The credit for these initiatives goes to the Pakistani government's national focal person, currently the DG of the newly established Anti-Money Laundering Authority. One must also

acknowledge the proactive and responsive engagement approach adopted since 2022 by our current and former ambassadors, the permanent representatives of Pakistan's mission in Vienna.

Since the adoption of the UNTOC (2000-2003), long negotiations on the review mechanism were initiated following the first COP in 2004. In 2018, at the ninth COP a mechanism was agreed on. However, civil society's access to the review process remained a key point of contention. The actual operation of the review mechanism started in 2020 when Pakistan was placed in the first group of 62 countries to commence the review process. Pakistan could not initiate the review process as the national focal person had not yet been appointed by our government.

However, on the initiative of civil society, the government appointed one in January 2022. Fortunately, as a professionally sound senior police officer, he happened to be the notified national expert on organised crime. Since then, Pakistan's progress in the review process has been impressive, with almost all the cluster-1 review requirements fulfilled. The only delay is on the part of the peer review countries.

Representatives of Pakistan's civil society alliance have participated in all the dialogues held in Vienna since 2022 on the three UNTOC Protocols on Firearms, Trafficking in Persons, and Smuggling of Migrants. In addition, civil society input was also given during the CD (constructive dialogues) on international cooperation and technical assistance. Based on the experience and interactions over the last three years, the Vienna-based Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, came up with the first-ever civil society declaration on the UNTOC during the recent COP. The clear objectives are to raise the level of civil society engagement with member states, ensure that its inputs are coordinated and disseminated effectively, highlight key procedural and substantive issues, and build a strong global network of collaboration.

The 2024 Vienna civil society UNTOC declaration is aimed at pushing back against efforts to limit or silence civil society voices, and at protecting and defending those uncovering corruption and related efforts contributing to organised crimes. It recognises the unique position of civil society as a bridge-builder and reaffirms the need for integration of civil society engagement with communities and victims. It recommends survivor-centric, trauma-informed and human rights-based approaches.

The declaration seeks a better and coordinated whole-of-society approach to dealing with serious and organised crimes. As we approach the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the UNTOC, the slow pace of the review mechanism since 2020 is a cause of concern. All parties need to redouble their efforts and raise their commitment to ensuring the effective implementation of the convention. While the efforts of Pakistan's institutions and civil society in this endeavour have been recognised by the international community in the first phase of the review mechanism, it is essential that long-term political commitment is ensured for holistic implementation, in active collaboration with partners in civil society.

The writer is director of the Centre for Governance Research Pakistan and vice chair of the Board of Vienna-based Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 26, 2024**



## Six personnel among eight martyred in suicide blast on post in North Waziristan

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Soldiers keep vigil from a post on top of a mountain in the North Waziristan district.

### • Several vehicles damaged in N. Waziristan attack • Militants target former JUI-F senator's residence

NORTH WAZIRISTAN / PESHAWAR: At least eight people, including four policemen and two security officials, embraced martyrdom and several others were injured in a suicide bomb blast at a joint police and security forces checkpoint in the Eidak area of North Waziristan district, officials said.

The attack took place when personnel were inspecting vehicles, they said, adding that the suicide bomber, travelling in a rickshaw, blew himself up at the Aslam checkpoint.

"Four policemen, two security personnel and two civilians have been martyred," an official said.

The injured were initially shifted to a Miramshah hospital before being airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital in Bannu district.

Police sources said several vehicles were damaged in the blast. The area was immediately cordoned off and the road was closed.

No statement was immediately issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations, the military's media wing.

The attack follows a series of terrorist assaults over the past two days, which claimed the lives of 15 law enforcement personnel in various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The deadliest of these occurred in the Darazinda area of Dera Ismail Khan district, where 10 Frontier Constabulary soldiers were martyred in an attack on a checkpoint.

A banned militant group claimed responsibility for that attack, describing it as "revenge" for a military operation in Bajaur earlier in the week, which saw nine militants, including a key leader, Said Mohammad alias Qureshi Ustad, killed on Wednesday.

## **Ex-JUI-F senator targeted**

On Friday night, militants targeted the residence of former JUI-F Senator Maulana Mohammad Saleh Shah in Upper South Waziristan's Khaisoor area in Tiarza tehsil.

According to police sources, unknown attackers planted a bomb near the house, causing significant damage, but no casualties.

Mr Shah's son, Shams, said the attackers wanted to assassinate his father. Armed men reportedly stormed the house and opened fire, but the family remained unharmed.

Police have launched an investigation into the incident, with sources suggesting the attack may be linked to extortion demands that Mr Shah had refused to meet.

In a statement, the JUI-F leader, who is also the president of the South Waziristan Upper Political Alliance, condemned the incident, urging the government and law enforcement agencies to take a decisive action against extortion and restore peace in the area.

He revealed that this was not the first attack on his residence, attributing the repeated targeting to his refusal to pay extortion.

## **Condemnation**

President Asif Ali Zardari expressed heartfelt grief and sorrow over the loss of lives of civilians and security personnel in the North Waziristan suicide attack.

"Terrorists will never succeed in their evil designs," he said in a statement issued by the President House. He stressed the need to take all possible measures to eradicate terrorism.

KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur also strongly condemned the attack. "Such cowardly acts will never weaken the resolve of our forces. The people and security personnel have made immense sacrifices in the war against militancy," Mr Gandapur said in a statement.

He assured the public that the government stands by its security forces, adding, "The militants will soon be defeated and peace will prevail in the country."

With input from our correspondent in South Waziristan

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 27, 2024**

## Crimes of collusion

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MULTIPLE socioeconomic factors propel criminal practices. Preying on the poor for astronomical profit tops the list. The fact that Pakistan appears on 'Tier 2' of the 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report by the US State Department should be viewed under this lens. Amid frequent reports of human trade, KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's call for widespread awareness in eliminating trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, with guidelines based on information and legal knowledge, is encouraging. At an interactive session on media reporting on human trafficking, smuggling of migrants and bonded labour, Mr Kundi underlined key areas: protection for the identity and dignity of victims, assessment of law enforcers' performance, and the need for media to connect sufferers with legal aid provided by the government and NGOs.

Unfortunately, we are saddled with a mammoth menace because the government has failed to provide citizens with a professional police force and empowered women, child and labour protection departments that are free from charges of patronage. Despite significant legislation in 2018, the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act and the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, the rights of victims of human trafficking and smuggling remain compromised due to poor enforcement. While Pakistan ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2022, it is not among the signatories to the UNTOC's Trafficking in Persons Protocol. We need drastic reforms focused on uprooting the culture of impunity and official collusion for effective enforcement of the law, while bearing in mind that transnational organised crimes are conquered through sound strategies, based on practices and procedures stipulated in global conventions. Long cursed with the acceptance of social sins, the state has to understand that its infamy creates an unsafe environment for marginalised people. And that socioeconomic progress evades unsafe nations.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 27, 2024**

# Four terrorists killed in separate Khyber Pakhtunkhwa operations

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Security forces killed four terrorists in two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media wing said.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), an intelligence-based operation was conducted in North Waziristan District where, "after an intense exchange of fire, two khawarij including Kharji Insaf Ullah, were sent to hell."

The ISPR added that in another operation in Khyber District, "own troops effectively engaged the khawarij location and resultantly two khawarij were killed, while three got injured".

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed khawarij, who "remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the law enforcement agencies as well as the innocent civilians", according to the ISPR.

The military's media wing said that sanitisation operations were underway to "eliminate any other khariji found in the area".

"[The] security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country," the ISPR stated.

In July, the government, through an official notification, designated the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as Fitna al Khawarij, while mandating all institutions to use the term khariji (outcast) when referring to the perpetrators of terrorist attacks on Pakistan.

On Saturday, at least eight people, including four policemen and two security officials, embraced martyrdom and several others were injured in a suicide bomb blast at a joint police and security forces checkpoint in the Eidak area of North Waziristan, officials said.

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"Four policemen, two security personnel and two civilians have been martyred," an official said. The injured were initially shifted to a Miramshah hospital before being airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital in Bannu district.

Police sources said several vehicles were damaged in the blast. The area was immediately cordoned off and the road was closed.

The country has witnessed a sharp uptick in the number of attacks targeting security forces, other law enforcement agencies, and security checkpoints, particularly in Balochistan and KP.

Attacks escalated after the TTP broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022 and vowed to target security forces.

SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 27, 2024

# State of chaos

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PAKISTAN is the third-worst country for law and order, according to the World Justice Project's 2024 Rule of Law Index. Ranking 140th out of 142 countries, only Mali and Nigeria score lower, reflecting our ongoing struggle to control crime, manage unrest, and reduce violence. Daily incidents of street crime, kidnappings, and terrorism in major cities underscore the need for stronger law enforcement and public safety measures. The report highlights other serious gaps as well. Pakistan ranks 120th in corruption, a factor driven by widespread misuse of power. Despite efforts by NAB and the FIA in high-profile cases, the perception remains that these bodies act selectively and out of political expediency. For genuine progress, these agencies must be empowered to act independently, holding all public offices accountable. The introduction of whistleblower protection legislation is a positive step, yet more needs to be done to ensure citizens feel safe reporting corruption. Pakistan also ranks poorly (106th) in 'Open Government' with restricted access to information and limited public involvement. While the Right to Information Act was introduced to foster transparency, accessing government data and decisions is an opaque process. Effective enforcement of this act, alongside better civic engagement channels, would empower citizens and increase trust, especially in rural areas where government outreach is weak.

Pakistan's 125th ranking in 'Fundamental Rights' highlights ongoing challenges in freedom of expression and assembly. Crackdowns on the media is concerning. Legal safeguards that protect journalists and civil society groups from state repression are essential to uphold these rights. 'Weak Regulatory Enforcement' (127th) is another concern. Inconsistencies in enforcing basic regulations – from consumer rights to environmental laws – allow private interests to bypass rules without accountability. Addressing these gaps requires strengthening regulatory bodies and ensuring they are free from political – and 'apolitical' – interference. Pakistan's 'Civil Justice' system ranks 128th, struggling with accessibility, graft and delays, especially in lower courts. Streamlining case management and promoting alternative dispute resolution could relieve pressure on the judiciary and improve timely justice. It is clear Pakistan is in dire need of major and genuine institutional reform. The path forward demands political will and unity. If there ever was a purpose for all quarters to be on the 'same page', it is this.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 28, 2024**



# Wave of violence

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ANOTHER wave of violence is cresting in KP. The past few days have seen multiple attacks that have claimed the lives of a number of security personnel.

On Saturday, eight people, including four policemen and two security officials, were martyred in a suicide blast in North Waziristan. An earlier attack took place in Darazinda, in D.I. Khan district, on Thursday night, when militants stormed a checkpoint and martyred 10 Frontier Constabulary men. The attack, claimed by the banned TTP, was portrayed as 'revenge' for a successful operation a day earlier in which nine militants, had been neutralised by security forces, who have stepped up their operations following the resurgence of terrorism.

This is a time when our forces should be highly vigilant and prepared for the enemy to strike from any quarter. They should also take the fight to the enemy with the support of the civilian population residing in hotspots for militant activity, who may be willing to aid the effort as they are weary of the constant violence.

The rising count of security personnel martyred in terrorist attacks has remained a cause of concern. Among those martyred in the recent attacks was a young off-duty cadet, aged only 19, who was slain in an assault on a Lakki Marwat mosque. It has been reported that the young man fought off the terrorists, laying down his life while saving many others in the process.

It is saddening to contemplate the loss of a life so young, and it compels one to ask how many more soldiers we will lose to such dastardly attacks before the state devises a coherent response mechanism to terrorist outfits, which are growing bolder by the day. It has been argued that Pakistan needs a dedicated counterterrorism force to meet terrorists in asymmetric warfare, as its regular forces are trained to fulfil a different responsibility and equipped with a different skillset. The recent spate of violence has highlighted this need further.

Things have lately been tense in the province due to a three-way stand-off between terrorist outfits, the citizenry and security forces. If recurrent incidents of violence are left unchecked, they will further erode people's confidence in the state and its ability to maintain peace and provide security to its citizens.

The state must, therefore, move immediately and decisively to wrest back control. While doing so, it must consciously avoid taking any action or decision that may antagonise the citizenry and, consequently, create unnecessary hurdles in the implementation of its policy measures.

On the other hand, the civilian leadership of the province must take responsibility for generating a political consensus on how the threat is to be tackled. A concerted effort is needed to rid the country of this menace.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 28, 2024**

## Two FC men martyred in Kurram

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KURRAM: Two Fron-tier Corps (FC) personnel were martyred when unidentified shooters opened fire on Tall Scouts in the Char Khel area of Lower Kurram district, police sources said.

The attack was carried out at a time when half a million residents have been facing acute shortage of daily commodities due to uncertain situation in the district, with several roads closed and public transport off the road.

The police sources said that the FC personnel were deployed for the protection of road users when some unidentified armed men attacked them. The two FC personnel suffered injuries in the attack and were rushed to Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Tall.

Later, police sources said both personnel could not survive.

Meanwhile, locals complained that roads were closed and patients could not be transported to hospitals, adding that there was acute shortage of medicines in the area.

Medical superintendent of district headquarters hospital of Parachinar, Dr Syed Meer Hassain Jan, said that patients, who could not be treated at the DHQ were required to be referred to other hospitals, but they could not be transported due to closure of roads.

The residents said instead of closures, roads should be secured. They complained that children could not go to schools due to closed roads. They said that in areas where schools were open, the students could not be transported due to shortage of fuel in the area.

Farmers lamented that since roads were closed, seeds could not be transported to the district timely besides there was also acute shortage of fertilisers in the area.

Also, traders and goods transporters demanded immediate opening of roads. They said that Kharlachi border crossing with Afghanistan was also closed, adding that the routes should be secured for durable peace in the area.

**SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 29, 2024**

## Three security men martyred in Bannu shootout



A combination photo of Lance Naik Ghazanfar Abbas, Major Atif Khalil and Naik Azad Ullah.

LAKKI MARWAT/QUETTA: Three security men, including an army major, embraced martyrdom in a shootout in the Bakka Khel area of Bannu while eight militants were also killed in the exchange of fire, said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

A statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) read that the security forces planned an intelligence-based operation (IBO) after reports about the presence of militants in the area. It said the security forces effectively engaged militants and killed eight of them. Seven militants were injured.

Major Atif Khalil, 31, of Azad Jammu Kashmir's Sudhanoti district was leading his troops when he embraced martyrdom along with Naik Azadullah, 36-year-old resident of district Karak and 35-year-old Lance Naik Ghazanfar Abbas from Layyah, the ISPR statement added.

It said a sanitisation operation was being carried out to eliminate "any other militant" found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan were determined to wipe out the menace of militancy. In a separate operation in Zhob, one militant was killed and another was arrested after he was injured by security forces in the Sambaza area of Zhob. The ISPR said security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation on the night of 29-30 October in the general area of Sambaza following a tip-off.

During the shootout, a militant was gunned down while another was apprehended in injured condition, it said, adding that weapons and ammunition were also recovered.

SOURCE: DAWN, OCTOBER 31, 2024